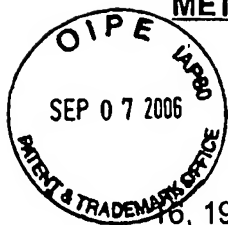


# METHODS AND SYSTEMS FOR PRODUCING RECOMBINANT VIRAL ANTIGENS



This is a divisional of pending application Serial No. 08/931,855 filed September 16, 1997, now United States Patent No. 6,692,751 B1, which is a continuation-in-part application of Ser. No. 563,733, filed Nov. 28, 1995, now abandoned, and of Ser. No. 272,271, filed Jul. 8, 1994, which is a continuation of Ser. No. 616,369, filed Nov. 21, 1990, abandoned, which is a continuation-in-part of Ser. No. 573,643, filed Aug. 27, 1990, abandoned; the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference.

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## Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to recombinant expression vectors which have segments of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) that encode recombinant HIV and HCV antigens operatively linked to the sequence AGGAGGGTTTTTCAT (nucleotides 1 to 15 of SEQ ID NO:1) to control expression of the antigens. These recombinant expression vectors are transformed into host cells and used in a method to express large quantities of these antigens. The invention also provides compositions containing certain of the isolated antigens, diagnostic systems containing these antigens and methods of assaying body fluids to detect the presence of antibodies against the antigens of the invention.